

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1. (currently amended) A fastening system for panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41), with the panels having retaining profiles (4a, 4b, 5b, 20, 21) arranged at the narrow sides of the panels, wherein mutually oppositely disposed retaining profiles (4a, 4b, 5b, 20, 21) match each other ~~in such a way that similar panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) such that a first panel and a second panel~~ can be fastened to each other, wherein at least one pair of the oppositely disposed retaining profiles (4a, 4b, 5b, 20, 21) has complementary hook elements (4e, 4d, 24, 25) which can be hooked one into the other and that the hook elements (4e, 4d, 24, 25) have hook projections (4f, 5f, 28, 29) connected to the first and second panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) by legs (4e, 5e, 26, 27), with such hook projections (4f, 5f, 28, 29) having retaining surfaces (4g, 5g, 33, 34) by which the first and second panels (3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41) are held against each other in an assembled condition ~~in such a way~~ so as to afford a gap-free floor surface, characterised in that the retaining surfaces (4g, 5g, 33, 34) of the hook projections (4f, 5f, 28, 29) are inclined, such that the hook projections (4f, 5f, 28, 29) are reduced from their free ends towards the legs (4e, 5e, 26, 27) and that the retaining surfaces (4g, 33) of the hook projections (4f, 28) bear against the retaining surfaces (5g, 34) of the complementary hook projections (5f, 29), and, in the assembled condition of the panels, the hook projection at the underside of the second panel bears against the leg at the top side of the first panel and that a space is provided between the hook projection at the top side of the first panel and the leg at the underside of the second panel.

Claim 2. (currently amended) A fastening system according to claim 1 characterised in that a first retaining profile (4a, 20) of the at least one pair of the oppositely disposed retaining profiles (4a, 4b, 5b, 20, 21) is provided with a hook element (4e, 24) formed from the leg (4e, 26) which projects

approximately perpendicularly from the narrow side of the panel and which is arranged at the top side of the panel, wherein arranged at the free end of the leg (~~4e, 26~~) is a hook projection (~~4f, 28~~) which faces towards the underside of the panel (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41~~), and that a second retaining profile (~~4b, 5b, 21~~) of the at least one pair of the oppositely disposed retaining profiles (~~4a, 4b, 5b, 20, 21~~) which is opposite the first retaining profile is provided with a hook element (~~4d, 25~~) formed from the leg (~~5e, 27~~) which projects from the narrow side and which is arranged at the underside of the panel (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41~~), wherein arranged at the free end of said leg (~~5e, 27~~) of the second retaining profile is a hook projection (~~5f, 29~~) which faces towards the top side of the panel.

Claim 3. (canceled)

Claim 4. (currently amended) A fastening system according to claim 1 characterised in that the retaining surfaces (~~4g, 5g, 33, 34~~) of the hook projections (~~4f, 5f, 28, 29~~) engage each other in such a way that complementary hook projections (~~4f, 5f, 28, 29~~) can be hooked one into the other only by elastic deformation.

Claim 5. (currently amended) A fastening system according to claim 4 characterised in that clearance (~~L2~~) is provided between an end (~~5h~~) of the hook projection (~~5f~~) at the underside of [[a]] the second panel (~~5~~) and the narrow side of the first panel (~~4~~) and that the end (~~14~~) of the hook projection (~~4f~~) at the top side of the first panel (~~4~~) in the assembled condition bears against the second panel (~~5~~) at least in the region of the top side of the second panel.

Claims 6 - 7. (canceled)

Claim 8. (currently amended) A fastening system according to ~~claim 3~~ claim 1 characterised in that ~~the~~ intermediate spaces provided with clearance in the assembled condition of two panels (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23~~) form adhesive pockets.

Claims 9-28. (canceled)

Claim 29. (currently amended) A fastening system according to claim 1 characterised in that the panels (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41~~) substantially comprise an MDF, HDF or chipboard material.

Claim 30. (canceled)

Claim 31. (currently amended) A fastening system for panels, the panels having retaining profiles arranged at the narrow sides of the panels, wherein mutually oppositely disposed retaining profiles match each other such that a first panel and a second panel can be fastened to each other, wherein at least one pair of the oppositely disposed retaining profiles has complementary hook elements which can be hooked one into the other and that the hook elements have hook projections connected to the first and second panels by legs, with such hook projections having retaining surfaces by which the first and second panels are held against each other in an assembled condition so as to afford a gap-free floor surface, characterised in that the retaining surfaces of the hook projections are inclined, such that the hook projections are reduced from their free ends towards the legs and that the retaining surfaces of the hook projections bear against the retaining surfaces of the complementary hook projections, and, A fastening system according to claim 1 characterised in that, in the assembled condition of the panel (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22,~~

~~23, 40, 41~~), the hook projection (~~4f, 28,~~) at the top side of the first panel bears against the leg (~~5e, 27~~) at the underside of ~~[[a]]~~ the second panel (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41~~) and that a space clearance (~~L1~~) is provided between the hook projection (~~5f, 29~~) at the underside of the second panel (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41~~) and the leg (~~4e, 26~~) at the ~~underside~~ top side of the first panel (~~3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 40, 41~~).

Claim 32. (canceled)

Claim 33. (new) A fastening system according to claim 31 characterised in that a first retaining profile of the at least one pair of the oppositely disposed retaining profiles is provided with a hook element formed from the leg which projects approximately perpendicularly from the narrow side of the panel and which is arranged at the top side of the panel, wherein arranged at the free end of the leg is a hook projection which faces towards the underside of the panel, and that a second retaining profile of the at least one pair of the oppositely disposed retaining profiles which is opposite the first retaining profile is provided with a hook element formed from the leg which projects from the narrow side and which is arranged at the underside of the panel, wherein arranged at the free end of said leg of the second retaining profile is a hook projection which faces towards the top side of the panel.

Claim 34. (new) A fastening system according to claim 31 characterised in that the retaining surfaces of the hook projections engage each other in such a way that complementary hook projections can be hooked one into the other only by elastic deformation.

Claim 35. (new) A fastening system according to claim 34 characterised in that clearance is provided between an end of the hook projection at the underside of the second panel and the narrow side of the first panel and that the end of the hook projection at the top side of the first panel in the assembled condition bears against the second panel at least in the region of the top side of the second panel.

Claim 36. (new) A fastening system according to claim 31 characterised in that intermediate spaces provided with clearance in the assembled condition of two panels form adhesive pockets.

Claim 37. (new) A fastening system according to claim 31 characterised in that the panels substantially comprise an MDF, HDF, or chipboard material.